

VIDEO POKER GAME WITH BONUS AWARD FOR MATCHING DESIGNATED HANDS

Cross-reference to Related Application

This application is based on and claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/223579, filed August 7, 2000.

This application relates to a method of playing video poker and more particularly to a method of playing video poker in which the player must match one or more particular predetermined playing cards or poker hand rankings during the play of the regular video poker game. This is done by tracking the cards dealt on the initial five card hand until the particular playing card or cards or video poker hand or hands is achieved. This feature is played in conjunction with regular video poker over a series of video poker hands and the player is awarded a bonus payout when he achieves the cards necessary to win the bonus award.

Background of the Invention

A well known game of chance offered to players in most gaming casinos is video draw poker. After making a wager, the player is dealt five cards face up. The player selects which cards, if any, the player wishes to hold, the unheld cards are discarded and replacement cards are dealt for the discarded cards. The final five card hand is analyzed to determine its poker hand ranking and the player is paid for winning poker hand rankings based on the amount of the player's wager. A pay table is displayed to the player showing the amounts that the player can win based on the poker hand ranking achieved by the player and the amount wagered by the player.

Bonus game features have also been added to video poker. In one known bonus game, video poker is combined with a game of bingo. A bingo card is shown in a video screen display adjacent to the video screen on which the regular game of video poker is played. Each of the spots on the bingo card is designated as a particular poker hand ranking, such as Four Aces, a Pair of Jacks, a Spade Flush, etc. and the center spot is a Free Space as is traditional in bingo. Whenever the player achieves one of the designated poker hand rankings as a

1 final hand during the play of the regular video poker game,
2 the corresponding spot on the bingo card is marked -- such as
3 by highlighting the spot. When the player achieves a winning
4 play on the bingo card (such as completing a row, column,
5 diagonal or the four corners), the player wins a bonus award.

6 The spots that comprise the winning arrangement are unmarked
7 -- such as by unhighlighting the spots -- and the bonus
8 feature continues with the other highlighted spots carrying
9 over.

10 There is a need in the gaming industry to provide new and
11 exciting games for the players to maintain interest in casino
12 gaming. It is an object of the present invention to provide
13 players with a bonus feature that is played in conjunction
14 with a regular video poker game so that the player has the
15 chance to win a bonus payout award during the course of play
16 of video poker.

17 It is a feature of the present invention to initially
18 designate one or more playing cards, either as simply a group
19 of cards or as recognizable poker hands, and the designated
20 cards are displayed to the player. As the playing cards are
21 dealt to the player during the play of regular video poker,
22 each dealt card that corresponds to one of the designated

1 cards results in a match of the designated card and the match
2 is shown by highlighting the designated card that has been
3 matched. When the player has matched all of the designated
4 cards, the player receives a bonus award.

5 It is an advantage of the present invention that the
6 player will receive additional payouts based on the length of
7 time that the player plays the gaming machine. This will
8 encourage the player to play the gaming machine for a longer
9 time and add an additional entertainment feature to the gaming
10 machine. This also adds a form of entertainment to the game
11 of video poker since the player will have a rooting interest
12 watching the designated cards being matched over the course of
13 the deal of the playing cards. The bonus feature does not
14 affect the play of the regular video poker game.

15 Other objects, features and advantages of the present
16 invention will become apparent from a consideration of the
17 following detailed description.

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19 **Summary of the Invention**

20 During the play of a session of video poker, one or more
21 playing cards, either as simply a group of cards or as

1 recognizable poker hands, are designated and shown to the
2 player on the video screen of the gaming machine. As the
3 playing cards are dealt to the player during the play of the
4 regular video poker game, each dealt card that corresponds to
5 one of the designated cards results in a match of the desig-
6 nated card. The designated card that has been matched is
7 shown by highlighting the matched card on the video screen.
8 When the player has matched all of the designated cards, the
9 player receives a bonus award. The amount of the bonus award
10 is based on the number of deals of video poker that it took to
11 match all of the designated cards.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

14 Figure 1 shows a gaming machine configured to operate the
15 method of the present invention with the first initial deal of
16 cards shown.

17 Figure 2 shows a gaming machine configured to operate the
18 method of the present invention with the fifteenth initial
19 deal of cards shown.

20 Figure 3 shows a gaming machine configured to operate the
21 method of the present invention with the eighty-third initial

1 deal of cards shown.

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3 **Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments**

4 The present invention adds a bonus feature to the method
5 of play of conventional video poker. In conventional video
6 poker, a player makes a wager to be able to play a hand of
7 cards. After making the wager (which can be any number of
8 coins, tokens or credits, but is usually a maximum wager of
9 five credits), the player is dealt five cards face up. These
10 first five cards are the player's initial hand or starting
11 hand.

12 The player selects which cards, if any, the player wishes
13 to hold from his initial hand. The unheld cards are discarded
14 and replacement cards are dealt for the discarded cards. The
15 final five card hand is analyzed to determine its poker hand
16 ranking and the player is paid for winning poker hand rankings
17 based on the amount of the player's wager. A pay table is
18 displayed to the player showing the amounts that the player
19 can win based on the poker hand ranking achieved by the player
20 and the amount wagered by the player.

21 The feature of the present invention can be applied to

1 any video poker formats such as Draw Poker, Deuces Wild Poker,
 2 Bonus Poker, Double Bonus Poker, Double Double Bonus Poker,
 3 Triple Bonus Poker, Joker's Wild Poker or any of the myriad of
 4 video poker formats that have been developed. Each of these
 5 video poker formats uses various arrangements of poker hand
 6 rankings as winning combinations and they use various payout
 7 amounts for the poker hand rankings. The amounts paid for the
 8 various winning hand combinations in each of the video poker
 9 formats are calculated to provide a certain theoretical game
 10 return which is generally in excess of 90%.

11 Figure 1 shows a gaming machine upon which the method of
 12 the present invention can be carried out. The gaming machine
 13 10 includes a video screen display 20 on which is shown the
 14 playing cards that will be used during the play of the method
 15 of the present invention. The video screen display 20 also
 16 includes other information and data presented to the player to
 17 allow the player to understand the play of the game and to
 18 effect the operation of the method.

19 In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the
 20 video screen display shows a credit meter 22 and a display of
 21 the total number of credits 24 wagered for a particular round
 22 of play of the game. The video screen display also has touch

1 screen locations to allow the player to DRAW 47 replacement
 2 cards and to make his initial wager, which can be made one
 3 credit at a time using the BET ONE location 26 or which can be
 4 made by wagering the maximum number of credits allowed by the
 5 gaming machine using the BET MAX location 28.

6 Each of the card locations on the video screen display
 7 can also be touch screen locations so that the player may
 8 designate which cards he wishes to hold by merely touching the
 9 card location on the video screen display 20.

10 The gaming machine 10 also has a button panel 40 which
 11 includes typical buttons that the player may press to activate
 12 various actions during the play of the method of the present
 13 invention. A CASH OUT button 41 is provided to allow the
 14 player to collect any credits which the player has accrued on
 15 the credit meter 22. A BET MAX button 42 and a BET ONE button
 16 44 are provided to allow the player to wager either the
 17 maximum amount of credits or to wager one credit at a time on
 18 the play of the game as desired by the player. A DRAW button
 19 46 is provided to allow the player to effect the draw step of
 20 the method of play as desired should the player prefer to use
 21 the button panel instead of the DRAW touch screen location 47
 22 on the video screen display 20. A plurality of HOLD buttons

1 48 are also provided to allow the player to select which cards
2 the player wishes to hold should the player prefer to use the
3 button panel instead of the card touch screen locations on the
4 video screen display 20.

5 In the preferred embodiment of the present invention,
6 when the initial five card hand is displayed on the video
7 screen display 20, the player must choose which cards to hold
8 by either pressing the card location on the touch screen or by
9 pressing the HOLD button associated with the card position.

10 The gaming machine 10 also includes a coin head 50 to
11 allow the player to insert coins or gaming tokens as wagers to
12 allow play of the gaming machine 10. A bill acceptor slot 52
13 is also provided on the gaming machine 10. In order to accrue
14 credits that may be used to play the gaming machine 10, the
15 player inserts paper currency or other suitable script or
16 gaming coupons into the bill acceptor slot 52 behind which, on
17 the interior of the gaming machine, is mounted a bill acceptor
18 which takes in and validates the currency. The monetary value
19 of the inserted currency is then applied to the credit meter
20 22, the credits on which the player may use to play the gaming
21 machine.

22 The video screen display also includes a BONUS CARDS

1 location 60 at which the designated cards are shown. These
2 are the cards that the player will attempt to match during the
3 play of video poker in order to win the bonus award. A HANDS
4 DEALT location 65 also tracks the number of hands dealt until
5 the player has achieved a match of all of the designated
6 cards.

7 Any other conventional and suitable equipment can be
8 included in the gaming machine.

9 In the method of the present invention, one or more
10 playing cards, either as simply a group of cards or as
11 recognizable poker hands, are designated and shown to the
12 player on the video screen of the gaming machine. Any
13 suitable number of cards can be designated as the cards to be
14 matched. The designated cards can be a recognizable poker
15 hand, such as a Heart Royal Flush (which would be five cards),
16 the four Aces and four Kings (which would be eight cards), or
17 even all of the Spades (which would be thirteen cards).
18 Alternatively, the designated cards can be a simply a subset
19 of the entire fifty-two card deck -- say ten cards selected at
20 random. Using a recognizable poker hand makes it easy for the
21 player to know which cards he needs to be dealt in order to
22 win the bonus award and thus makes it easy for the player to

1 root along while he plays the regular video poker game.

2 After the cards to be matched have been designated, the
3 playing cards for the regular video poker game are dealt and
4 displayed to the player. Each dealt card that corresponds to
5 one of the designated cards results in a match of the design-
6 nated card. The designated card that has been matched is
7 shown by highlighting the matched card on the video screen.

8 An example of the method of play is shown in Figures 1-3.

9 In Figure 1, the BONUS CARDS location 60 shows that the cards
10 designated are the Ace of Hearts, King of Hearts, Queen of
11 Hearts, Jack of Hearts and Ten of Hearts (the Heart Royal
12 Flush). The HANDS DEALT location 65 shows this as the first
13 hand being dealt.

14 The initial five card hand dealt to the player in the
15 regular video poker game is the Six of Spades, the Queen of
16 Hearts, the Two of Diamonds, the Nine of Hearts and the Queen
17 of Diamonds. There is one matching card of the initially
18 dealt hand with the designated cards -- the Queen of Hearts.
19 As shown in Figure 1, the Queen of Hearts is marked off in the
20 BONUS CARD location 60 in any suitable manner, for example the
21 Queen of Hearts can be highlighted to show that it has been
22 matched.

1 The player then plays out his regular video poker hand in
2 the conventional manner and winning final hands are paid and
3 losing final hands are lost.

4 The player then continues to play video poker in the
5 conventional manner with winning and losing plays being
6 handled accordingly. Prior to the start of each hand of play,
7 the cards are shuffled and an initial five card hand is dealt
8 and displayed to the player. Whenever one of the designated
9 cards is displayed to the player during the initial deal of
10 the cards in the regular video poker game, the corresponding
11 card is marked off in the BONUS CARD location 60. Each
12 initial deal of the cards increments the HANDS DEALT location
13 65.

14 Continuing with the example, Figure 2 shows that on the
15 15th deal of the initial cards, the player has been dealt the
16 Seven of Hearts, the Four of Hearts, the Two of Diamonds, the
17 Two of Clubs and the King of Hearts. The King of Hearts is a
18 matching card so it is marked off and joins the Queen of
19 Hearts as highlighted cards in the BONUS CARD location 60.
20 The HANDS DEALT location 65 shows 15 as the number of hands
21 dealt so far.

22 Again the play of the regular video poker game continues.

1 and counting of dealt hands begins anew.

2 In one embodiment of the present invention, the same
 3 designated cards are used as the bonus award cards when the
 4 game is reset. In another embodiment of the present inven-
 5 tion, a different group of designated cards are used each time
 6 the game resets. The designated cards can be randomly
 7 selected each time the bonus award is reset, preferably from a
 8 preselected collection of designated card groups -- e.g. each
 9 of the four Royal Flushes (Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs)
 10 can form the preselected collection and one of these Royal
 11 Flushes is randomly selected to be the designated cards each
 12 time the bonus award feature is reset.

13 The pay table shown in Table 1 is only representative of
 14 any of a myriad of pay tables that can be used. This pay
 15 table is also based on the assumption that the player is not
 16 required to make an additional wager to be eligible for this
 17 bonus award feature. In another embodiment of the present
 18 invention, the player can be required to make a separate wager
 19 of any suitable amount, say one credit, to be eligible for the
 20 bonus award and the moneys generated by this separate wager
 21 can be used to fund the bonus award pay table. This would
 22 allow much higher bonus awards to be paid to the player.

1 In the example shown in Figures 1-3, the designated cards
 2 to be matched were five in number. If a different number of
 3 cards were used as the group of designated cards, then the pay
 4 table would have to be adjusted to reflect the change in
 5 probability that occurs when the group of designated cards was
 6 more or less than five cards.

7 It is also possible to practice the method of the present
 8 invention using a deck of cards that has one or more Jokers
 9 added thereto. In such a situation, it would be necessary to
 10 adjust the pay table to reflect the change in probability that
 11 occurs when the deck of playing cards has more than fifty-two
 12 cards.

13 While the invention has been illustrated with respect to
 14 several specific embodiments thereof, these embodiments should
 15 be considered as illustrative rather than limiting. Various
 16 modifications and additions may be made and will be apparent
 17 to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the invention
 18 should not be limited by the foregoing description, but rather
 19 should be defined only by the following claims.